

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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USIA-06 /075 W

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R 251045Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2447

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

AMEMBASSY AMMAN UNN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT UNN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO UNN

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS UNN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA UNN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV UNN

USINT BAGHDAD UNN

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 0956

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (MRN 956 VICE 965)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS

SUBJECT: INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS

REF: TRIPOLI 0922

1. SUMMARY: BACKGROUND TO RCC MEMBER MUHAYSHI'S FLIGHT FROM
THE COUNTRY AUG 12 PROBABLY INCLUDES A STORMY RCC
MEETING ABOUT AUG 8 AT WHICH MUHAYSHI IS SAID TO HAVE
ACCUSED PRIMIN JALLUD OF FINANCIAL MISMANAGEMENT. EDITORIALS
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IN THE CONTROLLED PRESS ARE EXTOLLING QADHAFI AS THE

"SYMBOL OF THE REVOLUTION", BUT QUESTION NOW IS HOW WIDELY POPULAR UNHAPPINESS WITH QADHAFI HAS INFECTED THE ARMY. MUHAYSHI'S BETRAYAL IS A POLITICAL, AND PROBABLY ALSO A PERSONAL, BLOW TO QADHAFI. ALTHOUGH OUTWARD INDICATIONS ARE THAT HE REMAINS FIRMLY IN CONTROL, QADHAFI'S UNCHARACTERISTIC RECOURSE TO REPRESSION, INSTEAD OF EXILE IN THE DESERT, MAY BE A SIGN OF WEAKNESS RATHER THAN STRENGTH. END SUMMARY.

2. NOW THAT THE DUST HAS SETTLED AFTER OMAR AL-MUHAYSHI'S FLIGHT TO TUNISIA, THE DISAPPEARANCE OF BASHIR HAWWADI, AND ARRESTS IN THE ARMY IT IS TIME TO SUMMARIZE WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT WHAT HAS HAPPENED, AND TO DRAW PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS ABOUT WHERE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS LEAVE THE REGIME.

3. WHAT HAPPENED: ALTHOUGH MUCH IS STILL UNCLEAR, IN RETROSPECT FIRST INDICATION THAT SOMETHING WAS UP CAME JULY 28, WHEN QADHAFI TOOK THE UNUSUAL STEP OF TAKING MUHAYSHI WITH HIM TO KAMPALA. SHORTLY AFTER QADHAFI'S RETURN, A PRESS REPORT OUT OF CAIRO CLAIMED THAT MAJOR ABD AL-FATTAH YUNIS, COMMANDER OF THE REPUBLICAN GUARD IN BENGHAZI, HAD BEEN ARRESTED ALONG WITH A NUMBER OF OFFICERS, AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME QADHAFI WAS GIVING A SPEECH IN WHICH HE WARNED AGAINST THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION, A NEW NOTE FOR HIM.

4. IT WAS AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND THAT ACCORDING TO A REPORT IN WHICH WE PLACE CREDENCE, A STORMY RCC MEETING TOOK PLACE ON ABOUT AUG 8. MUHAYSHI IS SAID TO HAVE CONFRONTED PRIMIN JALLUD (BUT NOT QADHAFI) WITH A DEMAND FOR AN EXPLANATION OF THE SUDDEN REDUCTION OF HIS MINISTRY'S BUDGET. "WHERE DOES ALL OUR MONEY GO", HE IS REPORTED TO HAVE DEMANDED. JALLUD IS SAID TO HAVE REPLIED CONTEMPTUOUSLY, AND MUHAYSHI TO HAVE THEN WALKED OUT OF THE MEETING AFTER DENOUNCING JALLUD' MANAGEMENT OF GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES. ALLEGATIONS OF CORRUPTION WERE DEFINITELY IN THE AIR, ACCORDING TO THIS ACCOUNT, AND QADHAFI IS SAID TO HAVE LISTENED TO THE DISPUTE IN SILENCE.

5. A FEW DAYS LATER, ON AUG 12, ALL EXIT VISA OF LIBYANS WERE SUDDENLY DECLARED INVALID, AND POSTERS APPEARED IN THE STREETS DENOUNCING UNSPECIFIED "ENEMIES OF THE REVOLUTION-
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(TRIPOLI 911 NOTAL). IT WAS LATER REVEALED (ALTHOUGH NOT PUBLICLY UNTIL AUG 17, BY CAIRO PRESS) THAT MUHAYSHI HAD MANAGED TO FLEE ACROSS THE BORDER TO TUNIS ABOUT AUG 12. TRIPOLI WAS AWASH WITH RUMORS OF A COUP ATTEMPT, WHICH WE WERE INCLINED TO DISMISS AT FIRST SINCE NO OTHER SECURITY PRECAUTIONS APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN TAKEN.

6. ON AUG 15, AN RCC DECISION WAS MADE PUBLIC SETTING UP A

NEW "AUDIT COUNCIL" TO MONITOR GOVT SPENDING UNDER THE OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF THE PRIME MINISTER (JALLUD). AN EDITORIAL AUG 16 IN THE ARMY NEWSPAPER CALLED FOR A NEW POLICY OF "REVOLUTIONARY FIRMNESS WITH "MUTINEERS", AND THE NEXT DAY, DRACONIAN NEW LAWS WERE PROMULGATED, AGAIN IN THE NAME OF THE RCC, PROVIDING FOR THE DEATH PENALTY OR LIFE IMPRISONMENT FOR A WHOLE ARRAY OF POLITICAL CRIMES, INCLUDING "ECONOMIC DEFEATISM". MOST RECENTLY, AND EDITORIAL IN THE CONTROLLED PRESS HAS DECLARED THAT QADHAFI IS THE IRREPLACEABLE "SYMBOL OF THE REVOLUTION." "HE IS THE MASSES, AND THE MASSES ARE HIM; HE IS THE PRINCIPLES (OF THE REVOLUTION), AND THE PRINCIPLES ARE HIM". THIS REPRESENTS A SHARP CHANGE FROM THE PREVIOUS LINE, WHICH USED TO BE THAT INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING QADHAFI, ARE NOT IMPORTANT.

7. THROUGHOUT ALL OF THIS LIFE IN TRIPOLI HAS REMAINED CALM, IN UNEASY, AND PREPARATIONS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE REGIME'S SIXTH ANNIVERSARY SEPT 1 HAVE GONE FORWARD UNINTERRUPTED.

8. WHAT NEXT? THE MAJOR QUESTION HOW IS HOW WIDESPREAD OPPOSITION TO QADHAFI WAS, OR IS, AMONG THE OFFICER CORPS. THERE ARE STRONG RUMORS THAT MAJOR 'UMAR AL-HARIRI, A KEY OFFICER ON THE RCC STAFF, IS UNDER ARREST, AND THERE IS TALK OF THE ARREST OF OTHER OFFICERS. THESE REPORTS ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE DISCONTENT OF THE CIVILIAN POPULACE HAS INFECTED THE ARMY, MAKING THE PROSPECT OF QADHAFI'S OVERTHROW THINKABLE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE MINDS OF MANY LIBYANS - AND IN OUR MINDS AS WELL.

9. ALTHOUGH EVERY OUTWARD EVIDENCE IS THAT QADHAFI REMAINS FIRMLY IN CONTROL, HIS AUTHORITY HAS BEEN WEAKENED BY THE DEFECTION OF MUHAYSHI AND HAWWADI. MUHAYSHI IN PARTICULAR HAD BEEN CLOSE TO QADHAFI SINCE THEY WERE IN HIGH SCHOOL
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TOGETHER, AND HE HAS SAID THAT HE JOINED THE ARMY BECAUSE QADHAFI TOLD HIM TO. ONLY JALLUD IS AN OLDER COMRADE IN ARMS, AND MUHAYSHI'S BETRAYAL MUST BE A HEAVY PERSONAL BLOW TO QADHAFI. IT IS ALSO A BLOW TO THE POLITICALLY USEFUL FICTION OF COLLEGIAL RULE WHICH QADHAFI XIBI SOJ, TO MAINTAIN SINCE TAKING POWER. ALTHOUGH0\$"FQP.R/(+\$<&AW,(0!XCH3K.P/.5Q9\$M8AUG_T#AF\$VF_8+4: H/FA0O+F:62U!?!G_8KQJQZA7A#>JP(019(BM\$/0KG_="/+FE&2H(?I6_BWKUFB;G

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